House Resolution 349, the Chair may reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting under clause 6 of rule XVIII and clauses 8 and 9 of rule XX.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 349 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1867.

□ 1920

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1867) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010 for the National Science Foundation, and for other purposes, with Mr. ALTMIRE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. BAIRD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support today of H.R. 1867, the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2007.

H.R. 1867 was introduced by myself, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), and several other members of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education. It was ordered reported by the unanimous vote of the Committee on Science and Technology, and is widely supported by industry and academia.

The National Science Foundation was last authorized by Congress in 2002 for 5 years, so we are right on track to ensure the continued growth and relevance of this very important agency.

The National Science Foundation is the only Federal agency whose mission is to support science and engineering research across all disciplines. Currently NSF funds 20 percent of all basic research conducted at American colleges and universities. In many fields such as mathematics, computer sciences and social science, NSF is the major source of Federal backing.

In its 57-year history, NSF has helped cultivate a scientific research enterprise in which the capacity for creativity and innovation is unrivaled in the world. Some economists estimate that half of the U.S. economic growth since World War II has been the result of technological innovation stemming from basic research and development.

NSF also has a mission to achieve excellence in U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics education at all levels and in all settings from kindergarten through postdoctoral training.

I don't think we can stress enough the critical leadership role that NSF has in improving STEM education, and I want to especially thank Science and Technology Chairman GORDON for tireless efforts on these issues.

In addition to supporting research and education grants at colleges and universities across the country, NSF also helps to support the construction of world-class research facilities and equipment that help to attract the top scientists and engineers from around the world to U.S. universities.

As we have seen high-paying jobs outsourced, our children graduating high school well behind their international peers in understanding basic science, other nations surging ahead in export of high-tech products, it has finally sunk in, funding basic research and teaching our kids math and science has a huge impact on our economy, our competitiveness, our national security, and our population's well-being.

H.R. 1867, like H.R. 362 and H.R. 363, two other Science and Technology Committee bills that passed the House just last week, is one more important piece of the House leadership's innovation agenda. It is also consistent with the administration's own American Competitiveness Initiative, which called for a 10-year doubling for three science agencies, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy's Office of Science.

H.R. 1867 was developed with input received during two subcommittee legislative hearings, a number of other NSF policy hearings held over the last many months, and countless informal conversations with NSF stakeholders both inside and outside of government.

Dr. EHLERS and I personally traveled over to NSF last month to meet with the Director and all of the Assistant Directors to receive their personal input.

In drafting H.R. 1867, we tried to limit it to policy, administrative and budget issues that have arisen since the last authorization in 2002, while leaving the Foundation with maximum flexibility in translating our guidance into practice.

Likewise, we minimized the specific carve-outs, especially in the research account, where all of the grants are awarded through a competitive, merit-reviewed process, and where the Foundation often needs to respond quickly to new fields of science and new ways of doing science.

I want to especially thank all my colleagues on the committee, especially Dr. EHLERS, Ms. JOHNSON, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. GINGREY, Chairman GORDON and Ranking Member HALL, for helping to improve this bill and move it expeditiously through the committee process. This was a bipartisan effort from beginning to end.

Mr. Chair, this bill is critical to American innovation and competitiveness. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 1867.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today, of course, in support of H.R. 1867, which authorizes funding for the National Science Foundation for the next 3 years. As most of us know, NSF is one of three agencies targeted by the President's American Competitiveness Initiative. The ACI aims to double the Federal investment in physical science research over the next 10 years. Appropriate investment in research development technology and math and science education will ensure that our country remains the world leader in competitiveness and innovation.

The National Science Foundation is the primary source of Federal funding for nonmedical basic research conducted at colleges and universities and serves as a catalyst for science, for technology, for engineering, and mathematics education reform at all levels. The return that we receive from our NSF investments far exceeds the cost. In addition, the NSF peer review process for receiving Federal funding is to be an example for all Federal agencies and one in which I hope all of my colleagues more fully recognize as an appropriate means of investment.

As reported, this is a good bill. I thank Chairman GORDON and Dr. BAIRD for working with Dr. EHLERS and with me to make improvements in the measure. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY), who has been a tireless member of this subcommittee and has championed the issue of undergraduate research, which is critical in preparing our students for the future.

Ms. HOOLEY. I would like to thank Chairman BAIRD for yielding me time to speak on this important piece of legislation and your incredible leadership on this issue.

The bill we have before us today will strengthen the National Science Foundation and allow it to better serve the needs of this country both today and well into the future.

The Foundation is unique among the Federal Government's scientific research agencies in that it supports science and engineering across all disciplines. Each year the National Science Foundation supports an average of 200,000 scientists, engineers, educators and students at universities,